

Spiritan Magazine

Volume 35
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 11

Spring 2011

Home and Away

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Recommended Citation

(2011). Home and Away. *Spiritan Magazine*, 35 (2). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-tc/vol35/iss2/11>

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Farewell Father Ted Colleton 1913–2011

To reach the age of 97 is itself an achievement. But to get there full of accomplishments in two vastly different countries on two continents is all the more striking. Fr Ted Colleton left behind a series of stands in favour of causes he believed in.

In Kenya he was declared “an undesirable alien” by President Jomo Kenyatta and put on the next plane home to Ireland. In Toronto, he went to jail rather than back down.

The Kenyan expulsion came about when he was deeply upset at the disparaging way the President talked about the missionaries, who in Ted’s eyes laid the foundation of education in Kenya. So Ted wrote a personal letter resenting the President’s “offensive references”. He delivered it through Mr. Kenyatta’s mother-in-law, one of his parishioners.

Next morning the cook came into his room. “Father, the Provincial Commissioner is outside and wants to see you.” About 3:00 p.m. the cook came in again. “Father, the police are here.” Ted packed pyjamas, shaving gear and a Bible in a small bag and went with him. An evening visit from the Minister for External Affairs: deportation. “After 30 years in Kenya I am leaving. I am taking with me my pyjamas, a shaving set and



a Bible. I hope everyone who comes to your country puts in as much and takes out as little. Good night.”

In Canada Fr Ted devoted a great deal of his time to working for the unborn with Birthright, Right to Life and Campaign Life Coalition. “Having preached and talked and written about the evil of abortion, I felt I had to take direct action.” He put a padlock on the rear gate through which the women and girls entered the Morgentaler premises in Toronto — the first of at least a dozen arrests and four trials. One of these resulted in six weeks in the Mimico Correctional Centre. His writings about life in prison were graphic, unsettling, stomach-turning.

Fr Ted’s last years — what he called the Final Stretch — were spent in a wheel chair: “If it is the Good Lord’s will that I take refuge in a wheel chair, I shall still be able to pray. And I have a lot of praying to make up! ... I want to affirm this fact: if I had another life to live — I’D DO IT AGAIN!”

An extended tribute to the person, life and accomplishments of Father Ted Colleton will be published in the Summer edition of Spiritan.



Neil McNeil “old timers” — students in the school from 1959-1964 — joined former members of staff to recall and celebrate their founding Principal, Fr Michael Troy CSSp, at a Mass and reception in Our Lady of Fatima Church, Toronto, to mark the first anniversary of his death.